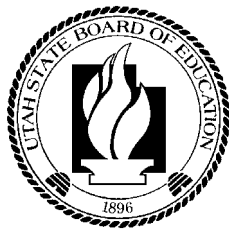


**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**West Jordan High School  
8136 South 2700 West  
West Jordan, Utah 84088**

**March 10-11, 2004**



Utah State Office of Education  
250 East 500 South  
P.O. Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**West Jordan High School**  
**8136 South 2700 West**  
**West Jordan, Utah 84088**

**March 10-11, 2004**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

**Steven O. Laing**  
**State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF**  
**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

**Patti Harrington, Associate Superintendent**

**Brett Moulding, Director**  
**Curriculum and Instruction**

**Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist**  
**Curriculum and Instruction**

**Salt Lake City, Utah**

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## **FOREWORD**

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate in-service growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 10-11, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of West Jordan High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Paul Argyle is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for West Jordan High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of West Jordan High School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

**UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**250 East 500 South**  
**P.O. Box 144200**  
**Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**District 1**

Teresa L. Theurer  
66 Canterbury Circle  
Logan, UT 84321  
Phone: (435) 753-0740

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3084 South 3550 West  
West Valley City, UT 84119  
Phone: (801) 969-6454

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1964 Hawk Circle  
Sandy, UT 84092  
Phone: (801) 572-6144

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Greg W. Haws  
5841 West 4600 South  
Hooper, UT 84315  
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1389 Harvard Avenue  
Salt Lake City, UT 84105  
Phone: (801) 582-5635

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455 East 200 North  
Lindon, UT 84042  
Phone: (801) 785-1212

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1323 Bryan Road  
Erda, UT 84074  
Phone: (435) 882-4498

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5256 Holladay Blvd.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84117  
Phone: (801) 272-3516

**District 13**

Linnea S. Barney  
1965 South Main Street  
Orem, UT 84058  
Phone: (801) 225-4149

**District 4**

Joyce W. Richards  
930 East 5000 South  
Ogden, UT 84403  
Phone: (801) 479-5370

**District 9**

Denis R. Morrill  
1065 South 500 West  
Taylorsville, UT 84118  
Phone: (801) 969-2334

**District 14**

Dixie Allen  
6024 South 2200 West  
Vernal, UT 84078  
Phone: (435) 789-0534

**District 5**

Kim R. Burningham  
932 Canyon Crest Drive  
Bountiful, UT 84010  
Phone: (801) 292-9261

**District 10**

Laurel Brown  
5311 South Lucky Clover Ln  
Murray, UT 84123  
Phone: (801) 261-4221

**District 15**

Debra G. Roberts  
Box 1780  
Beaver, UT 84713  
Phone: (435) 438-5843

**Jed H. Pitcher\***

Regence Blue Cross Blue Shield of Utah  
P.O. Box 30270  
Salt Lake City, UT 84108  
Phone: (801) 583-2375

**Sara V. Sinclair\***

1340 North 1500 East  
Logan, UT 84341-2851  
Phone: (435) 754-0216

**Steven O. Laing**

Executive Officer

**Twila B. Affleck**

Secretary

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*10/30/03*

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## WEST JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL

### ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

#### School Administration

Paul L. Argyle..... Principal  
James Birch..... Assistant Principal  
Michael Hughes ..... Assistant Principal  
Michael Kochevar ..... Assistant Principal  
Rebecca Laney ..... Assistant Principal

#### Counseling

Bell Breen ..... Counselor  
Lawrence Green ..... Counselor  
Shawnee Mouna ..... Counselor  
Eve O'Neill ..... Counselor  
Kevin Damron ..... Psychologist

#### Support Staff

##### Secretaries

Joan Brown  
Vicky Butterfield  
Sylvia Cox  
Deanne Curtis  
Shirley Dellagnola  
Laurel Dimond  
Cheryl Faux  
Tricia Johnson  
Mary Lou Tegge

##### School Lunch

Cherisse Bingham  
Gloria Butcher  
Carmen Carter

Dale Evans  
Marilyn Graham  
Vicki Hansen  
Kellie Hunsaker  
Mary Ann Lancaster  
Flora Lopez  
Gayleen Marcy  
Leslie Northrup  
Evelia Ochoa  
Adriane Price  
Nadine Robinson  
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Kurt Jensen  
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Kent Montgomery  
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Lad Tanner  
Jason Torgerson  
Adam Wilcock

## **Faculty**

Tamara Adams  
Amy Anderson  
Jodene Arakelian  
Sandra Arslanian  
Brent Atkinson  
Linda Bayes  
Heatherly Benson  
Gayle Betensen  
James Boyce  
Jack Branin  
Scott Briggs  
William Chinchin  
Melo Choque  
Nickell Christensen  
Kristie Clawson  
Kelly Colby  
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Dixie Crowther  
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Robin Duffy  
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Kim Durfee  
Shae Edwards

Diane Evans  
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Chelle Leyva  
Valerie Lunnen  
Deena McClellan  
Rick Minor

Mike Morgan  
Kim Newbrough  
Lois Nielsen  
Mark Nielsen  
Mel Nomiyama  
Jodi O'Farrel  
Jennifer Pawlowski  
Dustin Pearce  
Lynda Peterson  
Caryl Pozza  
Grant Price  
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Meela Roper  
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Steve Stevens  
John Succo  
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Heather Tester  
Farrell Thompson  
Bruce Tucker  
Dodi Weiler  
Jana White  
Barbara Wightman  
Ed Willis  
Gerry Young



## **WEST JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The West Jordan High School Learning Community's mission is to instill in our students a commitment to excellence through the pursuit of learning, respect, knowledge, responsibility, and accountability.

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

The West Jordan High School Learning Community believes:

- Students are our first priority.
- Learning is an active process involving communications and collaboration between students, teachers, parents, and the community.
- Creative, critical, and analytical thinking is at the core of a quality curriculum.
- Students must learn to function and interact in society.
- Students must learn to be responsible and accountable.
- Our school provides opportunities for students to explore interests and careers.
- Everyone has the right to attend school in a safe and non-threatening environment.

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Dr. Robyn Roberts, East High School, Salt Lake City School District,  
Visiting Team Chairperson

Mrs. Paula Carlson, South Summit Middle School, South Summit School District

Mr. Larry Madden, Salt Lake City School District

Dr. Garrett Muse, Cottonwood High School, Granite School District

Mr. Lynn Westberg, Kearns High School, Granite School District

Dr. Lillian Zarndt, A University for Children and Adults, Springville, Utah

# **VISITING TEAM REPORT**

## **WEST JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL**

### **CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

West Jordan High School is a large suburban high school of 2,094 students located southwest of Salt Lake City in West Jordan, Utah. West Jordan High opened in 1981. Before West Jordan opened, the only west side high school in Jordan School District was Bingham High. The population of West Jordan City began to increase dramatically in the late 1970s, and as a result, West Jordan High school was built. Many students and their families were hesitant to leave Bingham High and its proud traditions. Gradually, however, student leaders emerged, new traditions began, academic achievement improved, and a sense of cohesiveness began to take hold. During the last 23 years, West Jordan High has grown and changed with the times. The area around West Jordan High is now almost fully developed, and population growth is heading south and west beyond the West Jordan boundaries.

The student body is becoming more diverse, and the schedule was changed from a traditional seven-period day to an eight-period block in 1999-2000. The community served by West Jordan High has a median household income of \$55,794, although the school serves all economic levels. The majority of the student body is Caucasian (85 percent), with 15 percent of the student body consisting of minorities (9 percent are Hispanic). The school has approximately 30 LEP students and 28 ESL students, with 10 teachers on the staff endorsed or working on their ESL endorsements. Thirty percent of the school population qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch.

*a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The West Jordan High school community takes pride in its school and the building of well-rounded students. Strong emphasis is placed on student character development. Many clubs, organizations, and teams exist to help students get involved at the school. Other school programs, such as the At-Risk Program and Youth in Custody, exist to help students who need alternative programs.

The school has done a good job of gathering general demographic data (i.e., enrollment, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, attendance, special education, and scholarship participation), testing data (i.e., ACT, AP, ATE, SAT, and CRT scores) and perception data (i.e., survey feedback), as well as examining the NSSE rubrics. A procedure for keeping an historical perspective on this data should now be put in place. Data collection and analysis are limited at this point.

Test scores show that there is work to be done in each of the academic areas. The school's SAT 9 median scores have fallen in most areas from 2002 to 2003. The CRT scores in math and science show that the majority of students score in the partial and minimal mastery areas. More specific analysis should be done to determine what factors may have influenced the drop in scores.

Absences and tardies have increased each quarter. The school is aware that improving student attendance needs to be a priority. The school staff also notes that they are looking at ways to decrease the number of dropouts, while the percentage of student dropouts (two percent) has not changed in the past five years.

The perception and survey data showed that parents and students had more areas of concern than did the teaching staff. Students had 27 areas of concern. Parents had 13 and teacher had five. Teachers view themselves positively and feel they make a difference in the lives of students. Recurring themes from at least two of the three group responses included the relevance of the curriculum, teacher availability, student cheating and substance abuse, the need for parent/teacher communication, ethical and moral education, and consistency in school rule enforcement.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The school profile is emerging. Data analysis is limited at this point, and the link between achievement gaps, departmental and organizational analysis, and the action plan is very loose. Disaggregated data needs to be shared and analyzed to see where help is needed. It is difficult to identify subgroups of students who need assistance, and the specific action steps to be taken, without sufficient in-depth reflection or analysis. Connections between the profile, data findings (both testing and perception data), and action steps need to be made. Additional data may be needed to validate assumptions contained in the current action plan, and/or action plans may need to be redefined as new data is received. The use of data to drive action is an ongoing process in school improvement.

Annually Yearly Progress (AYP) data and analysis should also be included in the school profile as it relates to district, state, and national standards. The school administration indicated that this material was not placed in the profile because at the time Jordan School District had asked to keep this information confidential.

Efforts have been made to bring new West Jordan teachers up to date on the school improvement process. The number of years teachers have taught at West Jordan High may be lower, but the number of years in overall teaching is high. Data and analysis on hiring trends and turnover may provide helpful information.

Data on student behavior referrals, suspensions, school safety incidents, etc., could also be gathered as documentation of school safety.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

In general, the major steps of the new school improvement process have been followed. The school community and staff have used the process to collaborate, to conduct needs assessments, and to gather input from the various stakeholders. Depth of understanding and utilization of this process is shared by many, but not all, of the teachers and staff members. There are some (15-25 percent) who still have chosen not to be part of or accept responsibility for their part in the school-wide mission, vision, and goals. Continued professional development focused on research and best practices, as well as individual faculty accountability, will help unify all in this school improvement effort.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The school's profile and survey data identify both strengths and limitations. Additional data and analysis are required to pinpoint achievement gaps and target student and parent concerns.

## **CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

West Jordan High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. **Communication:** An effective communicator successfully interacts with others using a variety of mediums, e.g. reading, writing, speaking, listening, painting, singing, playing instruments, dancing, dramatizing, and sculpting.
2. **Complex Thinking:** A complex thinker has acquired a variety of thinking skills and is capable of using them appropriately in diverse situations.
3. **Character Development/Ethics:** A person of good character consistently behaves with honesty and integrity and reflects respect for others and self.

4. Collaboration: A skilled collaborator works effectively with others to identify and achieve specified results.

The DRSLs are commonly referred to school-wide as “The 4 Cs.”

**Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The stakeholders collaboratively understand and accept the elements of the school’s mission statement, particularly regarding “respect” and “responsibility” in character development. The commitment to excellence represents a longstanding effort, even given the four principal changes and much teaching staff turnover since the school opened. Although no one at the school could quote the mission statement, the DRSLs had clearly been memorized and displayed throughout the building.

The school should continue its efforts to proactively invite and encourage collaboration and communication from a wide cross-section of stakeholders.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The belief statements and mission statements were revised in June 2003, while the original DRSLs were retained. A commitment to school safety (one of the belief statements) is noticeably shared by all stakeholders. All teachers need to participate with and buy into the ongoing school improvement process. The momentum for school improvement in there, but is still being resisted by enough teachers to impede the process for all.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The four DRSLs in effect work well and are known by the entire school community. Activities center around West Jordan High School’s four central desired results for student learning (DRSLs): Communication, Complex Thinking, Character Development, Collaboration. The DRSLs address the belief statements; however, more emphasis could be placed on academic accountability as outlined in the school’s mission statement.

### **Curriculum Development:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of Utah Life Skills)?*

Most of the teachers at West Jordan High School either are aligned with or are in the process of aligning with the Utah State Core Curriculum. The degree of implementation of the Core varies among departments. A few instances of such implementation are of note. The Special Education Department uses the Core extensively and routinely gathers data related to Core performance to make curricular adaptations. Health classes do not currently follow the Core Curriculum. The Social Studies Department shows varying degrees of implementation, with some staff members maintaining longstanding traditions related to subject content and processes. The Math and Business Departments use the Core, but have some issues with covering the Core on the block schedule. The Science Department covers the content part of the Core Curriculum, but lacks understanding of the Core Intended Learning Outcomes. All other departments are following state Core Curricula.

Relevancy of the curriculum to students' careers and post-high school life should be emphasized.

Planning related to teaching on the block schedule is needed. Teachers need to understand pacing and instructional strategies to best utilize the allotted time.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

There have been outstanding efforts at West Jordan High School to create widespread understanding of the desired results for student learning. These DRSLs have been addressed more specifically by each individual department. Further analysis of disaggregated data is required to determine how each department's curriculum can be modified and updated. This process will promote elimination of outdated curricula and further implementation of current State Core content and intended learning outcomes for students.

All members of the Visiting Team observed that the school-wide goal of reading and writing in the content areas is evident in most departments. Efforts toward further implementation in all departments and classrooms, with a strong focus on all of the school's DRSLs, are ongoing.

Students and parents expressed appreciation for the preparation students are receiving at West Jordan High School. A wide range of course offerings are available to meet the needs of all students.

### **Quality Instructional Design:**

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

It was evident that on a department-wide level, students have access to a modest-to-wide variety of best practices. The types of instructional activities observed were direct instruction, some independent student exploration, collaborative exploration, cooperative learning groups multimedia, and role-playing. More content-specific modeling of varied practices could be explored through inservices in which teachers share their best practices and outside consultants or teachers are invited in as well. Continue professional development, centered around best practices, Multiple Intelligences, etc., placing an emphasis on using a variety of teaching strategies to improve instruction on the block schedule.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

It is evident that teachers care about their students, and that some teachers employ a range of instructional techniques to address the needs of different learners. The Visiting Team recommends that professional development (centered around best practices, Multiple Intelligences, etc.) be incorporated to help accommodate the wide variety of learning styles and needs of diverse learners.

The ESL classes (two times 15 students) work one on one with students until they achieve an 80 percent proficiency mark, at which point they are released but still have their grades monitored. At the time of the visit, forty-four students were being monitored and mainstreamed. In the study skills class students with low grades are worked with; a bilingual aide has been provided for ESL and lower-skill students.

Special education students are with the same teacher all day; some students go to individual classes. In the Gifted and Talented program, as in all of the above areas, general steps were given in workshops to improve best practices, but no content-specific or learner-specific instruction was given to teachers.

At this point there is no specific time line or plan to implement Quality Instructional Design, because tardiness, reading, and writing have held higher priorities in the improvement plan. There is evidence of cross-curricular planning and implementation (such as the Sports Academy) and collaboration between subjects and within departments.

There is evidence that teachers prepare the students for standardized tests, but more reflection is needed after the tests are returned to the teachers and departments so that the DRSLs can truly be more tangible and data-based in the classrooms.



- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

One teacher invitation for a.m./p.m. help was observed; the teacher commented that the times are not conducive to student participation because of extracurricular activities. A question was raised about whether it was possible to include a “help time” in the weekly academic schedule. ATE peer tutoring is provided.

Generally speaking, more in-service opportunities are needed for teachers concerning how to work with ESL, special education, and gifted learners’ needs. Low-skill ESL students could benefit from daily ESL class; mainstreamed, previously ESL students could benefit from further, more advanced ESL classes. Concurrent enrollment opportunities are limited because of the college caps on class sizes.

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

West Jordan High School has used DRSLs and the Core Curriculum to clearly articulate expectations for the school. In the classroom, a variety of assessments are used to determine whether the Core Curriculum is being met, including written exams, projects, performance tasks, projects, state CRT exams, state competency exams, and nationally standardized tests. The school emphasizes the Six Traits of Writing program across the curriculum, and should continue to assess its progress and relation to student test scores and other success measures.

It was observed and noted by teachers during the Visiting Team’s two-day visit that assessments and performance standards for the DRSLs have not been fully developed. The school is encouraged to continue to develop and reevaluate these assessments. Also, the staff needs to disaggregate and analyze the data derived from these assessments, using this information to drive decision-making.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Some of the departments at West Jordan High have made noticeable efforts to create assessments of student learning that are aligned with the essential knowledge, skills, and performance standards for student learning. Performance standards, however, do not appear to be fully developed on a school-wide basis. The Visiting Team’s recommendation would be to continue alignment with the State Core and national standards that define expectations for students. Analysis should center around who is learning, who is not, and why.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Teachers at West Jordan High School are aware of the importance of being sensitive to diverse students. Teachers try to use a variety of assessments to accommodate students. The teachers work to find ways to determine whether assessments are fair and unbiased. Monitoring and sensitivity to equity are encouraged.

### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The school has five administrators, including the principal, and responsibilities are delegated well. The principal is in his second year at West Jordan High, and has joined and supported the school improvement process and the momentum that already existed thanks to the key leadership among the assistant principals and teacher leaders in the school. The current leadership recognizes the need for continuous school improvement and works with teachers and community members to govern the school.

The school leadership promotes professional development through activities such as twice-monthly faculty meetings. The second faculty meeting each month is specifically reserved for in-service/professional development, and reports of successes are given at the next faculty meeting. Professional development on Six Traits of Writing and Literacy Across the Curriculum teaching strategy spotlights has been particularly successful at West Jordan.

The administration and department leaders are to be commended for their efforts in mentoring new teachers as they join West Jordan High School. The school has a positive climate and encourages students and teachers to do their best.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The use of data-driven decision making is emerging. The school leadership has made specific efforts to provide research-based strategies for improvement, and works to make sure it is a collaborative process with all stakeholders involved. Some teachers are resistant to examining data, collaborating, and joining the ongoing school improvement process, and they need to come on board for school-wide success. This will happen as the expectation exists and data continues to be examined. The Visiting Team is confident that the administration and teacher leaders will continue this effort.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

As the Visiting Team discussed and observed assessment at West Jordan High School with various stakeholders, it appeared that perceptions are being used more than data analysis to assess student achievement. Some teachers are using instructional strategies that require students to be complex thinkers, communicators, and collaborators, but they are not often aware of how to measure their progress. It is recommended that the faculty and administration work to develop standardized assessment tools that may be useful across the curriculum to monitor student progress and inform instructional decisions.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The leadership of this school provides positive, skillful stewardship. Students, parents, and faculty members report feeling that the operation of the school is consistent, fair, and orderly. All feel it is a safe, clean, and inviting environment. The administration takes an active role and responsibility for all aspects of the school's operation, and for the stakeholders. The leadership policies align with the school's beliefs and mission. The foundations of collaborative decision making have been well established. Input and participation are routinely sought. All aspects of the school enhance a sense of pride and belonging at West Jordan High School.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The allocation and use of resources are not well known among the stakeholders at West Jordan High School. Teachers, parents, and students indicated that the school district and the school administration make the decisions on allocation of resources. Trust Lands money is currently being used to help at-risk sophomore students. A broader discussion of what resources are used, what is needed, etc., may help in developing business partnerships, grant opportunities, and volunteer assistance as needed.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leadership has made a concerted effort to include all stakeholders in the school improvement process, including teachers, students, staff members, and

parents. The School Community Council is fully functioning, and teachers and parents report open lines of communication to and from the school leadership.

The school's SEOP process, PowerSchool Internet grading program, quarterly *Jag Magazine*, website, handbooks, and parent-teacher conferences are a number of ways in which the school elicits collaboration and encourages school responsibility for student learning.

### **Community Building:**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team observed a strong and positive atmosphere at West Jordan High School. Community and staff members, as well as students, seemed to have opportunity for involvement. A wide variety of clubs are offered to students, along with the opportunity for public service.

A recognition program to reward teachers has been well received by the staff and encourages quality teaching efforts. Outstanding student achievement is also recognized in a number of ways, giving many different students a chance to be acknowledged.

The Visiting Team found that the school community has established several collaborative and independent teams (SIC, SCC, PTA) to achieve school goals and enhance community involvement.

This Visiting Team noted that a significant number of staff members have not yet embraced the accreditation process and are hesitant to fully participate. A greater effort should be made to involve every staff member in the continuing process of accreditation.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

It is clear that efforts are being made both to involve and inform students and community members about West Jordan High. The Visiting Team found evidence of parent involvement on various committees, and believes that the school successfully engages many parents as partners in the learning process. Parents indicated a willingness to volunteer, but they did feel that they often didn't know where they could help. It is suggested that a school staff member work with the Parent Volunteer Coordinator. It is also recommended that an effort be made to involve a more diverse cross-section of stakeholders in parent groups so that all members of the community have a voice.

The Visiting Team did not find evidence that the school has fully developed collaborative networks of support with some community members, including clergy, governmental members, and business leaders. It is suggested that outreach in these areas be encouraged and supported.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school's organizational culture supports professional development and in-service opportunities. The established West Jordan staff, teachers, and administration (both past and present) are to be commended for their continued efforts and dedication to keeping the momentum of continuous school improvement. The school has used the publication *Indicators of Schools of Quality*, published by the NSSE, to address its instructional and organizational effectiveness through focus groups. This practice should continue with the rubrics as a way to facilitate and measure growth in each area.

Professional development opportunities are provided each month school-wide for all staff members during a second faculty meeting. Research and best practices are being used to improve the Communication DRSL, currently through the teaching of the Six Traits of Writing. Use of the Six Traits of Writing program described in Action Plan #1 is now evident in every department. The use of a central professional development theme seems to help the parts of the organization work together in accomplishing goals.

In spite of the high turnover rate, the new teachers are mentored and quickly brought on board with the school improvement process.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The administration and key teacher leaders actively support continuous improvement. The school has a positive, comfortable, clean, safe climate in which to learn. It is evident that there is a sense of community and team effort.

The momentum for school improvement exists, but needs participation and buy-in from all teachers so the process is not impeded for all. The expectation of data-driven decision making and professional development in specific areas can reinforce school improvement and help achieve buy-in from all teachers.

## **CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI**

### **Standard I – Educational Program**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

### **Standard II – Student Personnel Services**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

### **Standard III – School Plant and Equipment**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

### **Standard IV – Library Media Program**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

### **Standard V – Records**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

### **Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

### **Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel**

West Jordan High School reports no teachers lacking professional preparation; however, CACTUS lists four teachers as underqualified for their assignments, as of the annual report dated October 15, 2003.

### **Standard VIII – Administration**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

### **Standard IX – Teacher Load**

West Jordan High does not meet this standard. In the annual NAAS report, West Jordan High was cited for having fourteen teachers with loads in excess of 210 students.

## **Standard X – Activities**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

## **Standard XI – Business Practices**

West Jordan High School has met this standard.

## **CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN**

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan aligns improvement efforts with the school's DRSLs, but the plan also needs to address achievement gaps that may be revealed upon further disaggregated data analysis. The action plans should show results in student learning, and not be just a checklist to complete. The action plan should center on plans to help those students who are not learning, and then assessments should be done to note progress.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The majority of West Jordan High School's school team is committed to school improvement and appears willing to support the action plans. The information provided from the Visiting Team site visits will require some revision in the action plans. The Visiting Team is confident the site leadership will work to create awareness of and commitment to the revised action plans.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The current action plan does not have specific methods for monitoring progress in each area. Teacher lesson plans (including aspects of each action plan) and professional development activities can be checked off as accomplished; however, assessing progress in student learning requires a deeper collection and use of data.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team's overall impression of West Jordan High School is best stated by the most common phrase heard: "West Jordan High School is the best kept secret in the district."
- The Visiting Team commends the school's positive, comfortable, clean, safe climate. It is evident that there is a sense of community and team effort.
- The Visiting Team commends the consistent effort being made to teach and prepare the "whole child." West Jordan's four Cs (i.e., Communication, Complex Thinking, Collaboration, Character Development) demonstrate this emphasis.
- The Visiting Team commends the high values of a strong student body at West Jordan High School. Character education and good manners are expected, modeled, and exemplified.
- The Visiting Team commends the genuine sensitivity for others that was demonstrated during the visit, including compassion and inclusion of special education students in the school-wide community.
- The established West Jordan staff, teachers, and administration (both past and present) are to be commended for their continued efforts and dedication to keeping up the momentum of continuous school improvement. As the school experiences a moderate faculty turnover rate, the new teachers are mentored and quickly brought on board with the school improvement process.
- The Visiting Team commends the use of the Six Traits of Writing program that is described in Action Plan #1 and is evident in every department. The administration and leadership are commended for their efforts in continuous professional development.
- Cross-curricular creativity exists in many departments.
- Parents are to be commended for their willingness to be involved.
- Numerous clubs, programs, and organizations are encouraged and evident.
- All stakeholders made statements such as, "Students have the opportunity to find something they enjoy and do well in" regularly during the visit.



### **Recommendations:**

- Regarding data-driven decision making, the Visiting Team recommends the school establish a strategy to collect, share, analyze, and reflect upon the data. Look at issues through the three “lenses”: classroom, department, and school. Use the findings to revise the profile, departmental/focus groups, and action plan efforts where needed. Specifically address who is learning, who is not learning, and why.
- The Visiting Team recommends that all teachers be encouraged to participate and buy into the ongoing school improvement process. The momentum for school improvement is there, but is still being resisted by enough teachers to impede the process for all.
- The Visiting Team recommends that teachers continually revisit and focus on the State Core Curriculum’s standards and objectives for their assignments.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff incorporate a greater variety of teaching strategies to improve instruction on the block schedule. Continued professional development (centered around best practices, Multiple Intelligences, etc.), placing an emphasis on using a variety of teaching strategies should be implemented.
- The Visiting Team recommends that a plan be developed and put into place to proactively invite and encourage collaboration and communication from a wider cross-section of stakeholders.